

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 ARAE-00 AID-05 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-02

INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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P R 052159Z MAY 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEGUCIGALPA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9906

INFO DIA WASHDC

USIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY GUATEMALA

AMEMBASSY MANAGUA

AMEMBASSY SAN JOSE

AMEMBASSY SAN SALVADOR

USCINCSO

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, HO

SUBJECT: CONTINUING PRESS COVERAGE OF NEW GOVERNMENT AND UB SCANDAL

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 1781

1. CONSERVATIVE AND SENSATIONALIST LA NOTICIA OF MAY 2 REPORTED THAT AN AMERICAN NEWSPAPER, PERHAPS THE WALL STREET JOURNAL OR THE NEW YORK TIMES, HAD OFFERED THE GOH INVESTIGATING COMMISSION \$100,000 FTI THE ENTIRE STORY OF THE UB BRIBERY EPISODE. THE REPORT ADDED THAT THE COMMISSION WOULD NOT CONSIDER THE OFFER.

2. LA NOTICIA ALSO COMPLIMENTED THE NEW GOVERNMENT FOR ITS WILLINGNESS TO RECOGNIZE THE NATION'S SERIOUS ECONOMIC SITUATION AND MAKE CONCRETE PLANS TO OVERCOME ITS UNDERDEVELOPMENT. IN AN EDITORIAL THE PAPER COMMENTED APPROVINGLY ABOUT MELGAR'S RECENT XBEECH TO
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THE NATION, APPLUADING THE CHIEF OF STATE'S HONESTY,

MODERATION, AND THE STATEMENT THAT THE MILITARY WOULD RETURN THE COUNTRY TO CONSTITUTIONAL PROCESS AT THE APPROPRIATE TIME.

3. SENSATIONALIST EL CROIYSTA OF VFY 4 PRINTED AN INTERVIEW WITH CONSERVATIVE (PALESTINIAN ORIGIN) BUSINESSMAN JORGE FACUSSE WHO EXPRESSED FAITH IN THE NEW GOVERNMENT OF COLONEL MELGAR. EL CRONISTA ALSO QUOTED ANACH (CAMPESENO GROUP) PRESIDENT REYES RODRIGUEZ AS SAYING THAT HE EXPECTED THE NEW GOVERNMENT TO VIGOROUSLY EXECUTE THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW. RODRIGUEZ QUALIFIED HIS APPROVAL WITH A THREAT, SAYING THAT IF THE GOVERNMENT DID NOT CARRY OUT AGRARIAN REFORM, THE COAMPESINOS WOULD DO SO ALONE.

4. LIBERAL TIEMPO OF MAY 3 CARRIED A HEADLINE READING, "PRIVATE ENTERPRISE REAFFIRMS SUPPORT OF THE MILITARY GOVERNMENT." IN ITS INNER PAGE STORY TIEMPO REPORTS THAT MELGAR MET WITH A DELEGATION FROM THE HONDURAN PRIVATE ENTERPRISE COUNCIL (GOHEP) ON MAY 2. COHEP MEMBERS INTERVIEWED UNANIMOUSLY EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE MEETING AND WERE OPTIMISTIC ABOUT A CONTINUING DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND MELGAR. CONSERVATIVE BUSINESSMAN ADOLFO FACUSSE WAS QUOTED AS HAVING SAID, "THIS IS THE BEGINNING OF A GREAT DIALOGUE BETWEEN THE GOVERNMENT AND THE ECONOMIC SECTORS THAT WILL BE HELATHY FOR THE COUNTRY." HUMBERTO LEON IS QUOTED AS SAYING THAT MELGAR PROMISED THE PRIVATE SECTOR A ROLE IN REVISING THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW.

5. TIEMPO CONFIRMED THAT COLONEL OMAR ANTONIO ZELAYA REYES HAD BEEN NAMED BY DECREE 320 OF APRIL 30 TO REPLACE COLONEL POLICARPO PAZ AS HEAD OF PUBLIC SECURITY FORCE (FF).

6. IN ITS LEAD EDITORIAL OF MAY 3, CONSERVATIVE LA PRENSA RIDICULES WHAT IT SEEMS AS THE POSITION OF WORKERS AND STUDENTS PRESENTED DURING THE MAY 1 DEMONSTRATIONS, I.E., THAT ALTZBLAME BELONGS TO THE IMMORAL FRUIT COMPANIES WHICH BRIBED INNOCENT AND UNSUSPECTING GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS. LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LA PRENSA SAYS THAT THE QUESTION OF BLAME IS LESS IMPORTANT THAN THE DETERMINATION THAT BRIBERY WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN AND THAT INTERNATIONAL COMPANIES WILL ABIDE BY THE LAW. LA PRENSA AGAIN REPEATS ITS THESIS THAT THE UB DPISODE WOULD NOT HAVE HAPPENED IF THERE HAD BEEN A CONGRESS IN SESSION BECAUSE EVEN THE WEALTHY FRUIT COMPANY COULD NOT HAVE BRIBED A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF CONGRESSMEN TO AFFECT POLICY.

7. SEVERAL NEWSPAPERS HAVE PUBLISHED THE DECLARATION BY COPEMH, A SECONDARY LEVEL TEACHERFDJ ORGANIZATION, EXAMINING THE CURRENT NATIONAL SITUATION. COPEMH JOINED THE OTHER ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE CALLED FOR THE EXPROPRIATION OF THE FURIT COMPANIES AND A REVIEW OF ALL CONCESSIONS TO FOREIGN COMPANIES. COPEMH'S DECLARATION IS COUCHED IN THE SAME TERMS OF THE LEFTIST AND CHRISTIAN-DEMOCRATIC ORGANIZATIONS THAT HAVE PUBLISHED SIMILAR MANIFESTOS.

8. NEWSPAPER REPORTS HAVE CONFIRMED THE NAMING OF GUILLERMO BUESO AS PRESIDENT OF THE CENTRAL BANK.

9. COMMENT: FOR THE MOMENT MELGAR'S "HONDYMOON" CONTINUES. ORGANIZATIONS WITH OPPOSING VIEWPOINTS COXEINUE TO APPLAUD HIS OPENNESS AND WILLINGNESS TO DISCUSS EVENTS WITH INTERESTED GROUPS/ HOWEVER, IF NEWSPAPER REPORTS ARE CORRECT, HE MAY BE MAKING CONTRADICTORY ASSURANCES TO VARIOUS GROUPS OR HIS STATEMENTS ARE DOJNG VARIOUSLY INTERPRETED. IT IS DIFFICULT TO SEE HOW MELGAR, TALKING ABOUT AGRARIAN REFORM, COULD PLEASE BOTH ANACH'S RODRIGUEZ AND COHEP'S LEON AT THE SAME TIME. RODRIGUEZ HAS SAID THAT ANACH DOES NOT WANT TO AMEND THE AGRARIAN REFORM LAW. HE MUST HAVE FELT SOME UNEASE IN READING LEON'S STATEMENT THAT MELGAR HAD PROMISED THE PRIVATE SECTOR PARTICIPATION IN THE LAW'S REVISION. FOR THE MOMENT, THOUGH, MELGAR AND THE MILITARY APPARENTLY ENJOY THE GOODWILL OF THE MAJORITY OF THE HONDURAN PEOPLE.
SANCHEZ

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